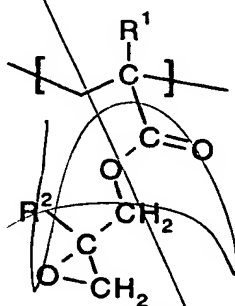


What is claimed is:

1. A curable composition comprising:

- (A) from 80 to 97.9 percent by weight, based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C), of a polyester component having an acid number in total of from 10 to 40 mg of KOH per gram of the component and consisting of one or more polyesters containing free carboxyl groups;
- (B) from 0.2 to 2 percent by weight, based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C), of a component consisting of one or more polymers or copolymers that each have an epoxy value of at least 3 equivalents per kilogram and a molecular weight (number average M_n) of from 800 to 20 000 and that contain identical or different structural repeating units of formula (I):



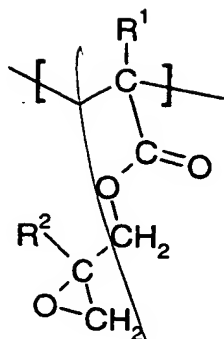
(I),

wherein R¹ and R² are each independently of the other a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and

- (C) a component consisting of one or more monomeric polyglycidyl compounds having an epoxy value of at least 3.5 equivalents per kilogram and a maximum molecular weight of 600, the amount of component (C) in percent by weight, based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C), corresponding to the difference between 100 and the sum of the percentage amounts of components (A) and (B) based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C); and
- (D) an accelerator for the reaction of epoxy groups with carboxyl groups

2. A composition according to claim 1 that contains from 85 to 96 percent by weight, especially from 88 to 95 percent by weight, of component (A) based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C).

3. A composition according to either claim 1 or claim 2 in which the polyester component (A) has an acid number in total of from 22 to 38 mg of KOH per gram of the component.
4. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 3 in which the polyesters that constitute the polyester component (A) have a molecular weight of from 4000 to 15 000, especially from 6500 to 11 000 (weight average Mw from GPC measurement using polystyrene calibration) and a glass transition temperature (Tg) of from 35 to 120°C, preferably from 50 to 90°C.
5. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4 in which the polyesters that constitute the polyester component (A) are based on neopentyl glycol and/or trimethylolpropane as the main alcoholic monomer constituent(s) and on adipic acid and/or terephthalic acid and/or isophthalic acid and/or trimellitic acid as the main acidic monomer component(s).
6. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5 that contains from 0.7 to 2 percent by weight, especially from 0.7 to 1.8 percent by weight, of component (B) based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C).
7. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 6 in which component (B) constitutes from 5 to 50 percent, especially from 7.5 to 25 percent, of the total weight of components (B) and (C).
8. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 7 in which component (B) consists of one or more polymers or copolymers each of which has an epoxy value of at least 5 equivalents per kilogram.
9. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 8 in which the polymers and copolymers that constitute component (B) have a molecular weight (number average Mn) of from 1000 to 10 000.
10. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 9 in which component (B) is constituted by polymers that consist substantially of identical or different structural repeating units of formula (I):



(I),

wherein the radicals R^1 and R^2 are each independently of the other a hydrogen atom or a methyl group.

11. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 10 wherein R^2 in formula (I) is a hydrogen atom.

12. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 11 that contains from 0.1 to 38 percent by weight, preferably from 5 to 15 percent by weight, of component (C) based on the total amount of components (A), (B) and (C).

13. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 12 in which component (C) consists of one or more polyglycidyl compounds having an epoxy value of at least 5 equivalents per kilogram.

14. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 13 in which component (C) consists of one or more monomeric polyglycidyl compounds selected from trimellitic acid triglycidyl ester, triglycidyl isocyanurate, hexahydroterephthalic acid diglycidyl ester, especially *trans*-hexahydroterephthalic acid diglycidyl ester, hexahydroisophthalic acid diglycidyl ester, hexahydrotrimellitic acid triglycidyl ester, terephthalic acid diglycidyl ester, isophthalic acid diglycidyl ester and cyclohexanedimethanol diglycidyl ether.

15. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 14 in which the epoxy value of components (B) and (C) together is at least 3.5 equivalents, preferably at least 5 equivalents, per kilogram.

16. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 15 in which the molar ratio of glycidyl groups to carboxyl groups in the composition is from 1.3:1 to 1:1.

17. A powder coating composition based on a curable composition according to anyone of claims 1 to 16.

AD: R2